LearnWithClay

European Lifelong Learning
In the Earth Construction Sector

The EU Project
LearnWithClay

The exciting EU partnership project LearnWithClay brings together twelve organisations across four European countries with the aim of providing vocational development and mobility opportunities for plasterers, trainers and craftspeople in the earth construction sector.

What we want to do:

- Make it possible for young people across Europe to learn earth construction techniques with our European partners.
- Make it possible for building & plastering specialists to learn and gain vocational qualifications through practical training, work experience and construction-site based, at home and abroad.
- Create and improve training opportunities and qualifications for migrant workers across Europe in the earth construction sector.
- Create a standardised European wide certification and training system implemented and recognised by each country.
- Promote a European-wide exchange of skills and networking in clay plasterers and earth construction.

This project recognises the value both of the older apprenticeship systems of the UK and the European Tradition of Craft/Handymen and women, whilst linking these with the requirements of the modern world.

To achieve this, we aim to standardise certification of the learning outcomes from Level 1 to Level 8 (equivalent to the current NVQ 5) in a system recognised across Europe. The project follows the recommendations of the “European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training” (ECVET) and the “European Qualification Framework” (EQF), creating a full range of learning outcomes in a compatible and transparent manner, and amplifying international mobility and lifelong learning opportunities for learners and practitioners across Europe.

The certification will be achievable to experienced craft people across Europe who can provide evidence of appropriate learning outcomes, skills and levels of understanding.

Earth and Clay are natural construction materials and have been central to European building practices for millennia. Today, two thirds of the world’s population live in houses built of earth, and in the UK there are over a quarter of a million earth houses still lived in, several hundred years old.

Clay plastering is a traditional craft that has a long tradition in Europe, particularly in the UK, where it is known as “earth plastering”. The many properties and benefits of clay plasters are therefore becoming well known.

Clay is readily and often locally available throughout Europe, low in embodied energy and carbon footprint, and provides high thermal mass. Clay plasters therefore become the material of choice in zero carbon, healthy, solar passive and energy efficient modern construction design. Growing interest has given rise to a widespread earth construction learning culture - with courses, seminars and construction site workshops in both the UK and across Europe. Yet in terms of continuing vocational training to recognised levels, no standardised accreditation has existed across Europe.

We have committed individuals, groups, and organisations working together in Europe to thank for the first successes in merging earth construction into continuing vocational training. Already in Germany there are two officially recognised qualifications for craftpeople and skilled labourers in the earth building sector: one is a specialisation in clay plaster and one in earth building techniques.

What we want to do:

• Create a standardised European wide certification and training system.
• Create and improve training opportunities and qualifications for migrant workers across Europe in the earth construction sector.
• Make it possible for building & plastering specialists to learn and gain vocational qualifications through practical training, work experience and construction-site based, at home and abroad.
• Create a standardised European wide certification and training system implemented and recognised by each country.
• Promote a European-wide exchange of skills and networking in clay plasterers and earth construction.

Growing interest has given rise to a widespread earth construction learning culture - with courses, seminars and construction site workshops in both the UK and across Europe. Yet in terms of continuing vocational training to recognised levels, no standardised accreditation has existed across Europe.

We have committed individuals, groups, and organisations working together in Europe to thank for the first successes in merging earth construction into continuing vocational training. Already in Germany there are two officially recognised qualifications for craftpeople and skilled labourers in the earth building sector: one is a specialisation in clay plaster and one in earth building techniques.

This hands-on course provides practical and theoretical instruction in clay plastering types, teaches design techniques, and also provides an insight into effective marketing strategies.

The learning methods used are interactive, based on site specific activities, and integrate practical, hands-on exercises with theoretical back-up.

The learning outcomes and the course materials were developed jointly by 14 partners from six European countries with each partner country working towards a recognised national qualification.

The course is aimed at craftpeople from the construction sector, including plasterers, painters and decorators, interior designers, teachers and technicians.

The course materials are available on CD-ROM in English, Bulgarian, German, French, Greek, and Polish. Translation into Czech, Slovene, and Slovene is planned for 2010.

The Clay Plastering & Design qualification has been developed within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci EU Project “Clay Plasters” and this qualification is now available to European trainers through the European School for Earth Construction of the FAI, in association with the Schwemm Craft Chamber.

Amazonails, one of the European partners and lead UK partner in this project, offers training courses in clay rendering from entry level through to advanced practice both through bespoke workshops and on-site practical training. They also work with the Centre of Alternative Technology in Wales delivering their in-house clay plastering and rendering courses. All of Amazonails’ earth and clay courses are RIBA (Skills) accredited, allowing bold and design professionals to gain continuing professional development certification. Amazonails is also partnered with the National Specialist Team from Construction Skills, the sector skills council for construction in the UK, to look at delivering accredited earth and clay training within the UK as part of built environment courses from entry level through to Level 6.

The teaching materials have in the meantime been put to use in a number of European countries in a wide variety of contexts. In Germany and France, teachers of earth construction are able to attend courses on the content and methodology of the course. The Leonardo da Vinci mobility project known as “Mobility in Earth Building” also makes it possible for trainees to undergo a three-week practical residential course with our European partners.

Contact amaamonts or construction skills for further information.

The project is financed with the support of the European Commission in the Lifelong learning Programme, Leonardo da Vinci, international projects. Responsibility for the contents of the publication rests solely with the Project Partnership; the Commission is not accountable for the further use of the information contained herein.

The LearnWithClay project aims to change this situation.

Contact the UK partners to train up in earth and clay construction.

The LearnWithClay project aims to change this situation.

Contact the UK partners to train up in earth and clay construction.

The LearnWithClay project aims to change this situation.

Contact the UK partners to train up in earth and clay construction.

The LearnWithClay project aims to change this situation.